

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 7  
120 SOUTH SPRING STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-3606  
TDD (213) 897-6610



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**VENTURA STATE ROUTE 118  
WILDLIFE CORRIDOR MULTI-AGENCY WORKING GROUP MEETING  
DECEMBER 9, 2004 – 9:00A.M. TO 10:30 A.M.  
SIMI VALLEY CITY HALL  
2929 TAPO CANYON ROAD, SIMI VALLEY, CA**

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **I. Introductions**

The meeting began with self introductions (see sign in sheet). This working group will focus on the VEN 118 to identify wildlife corridor mitigation, enhancement, and connectivity opportunities with others within the study area. Caltrans would like to see a partnering process so that decisions are made collectively that help us move ahead with for future roadway improvements.

### **II. Purpose of Working Group**

To involve various agencies and landowners in identifying what actions are desirable, gain consensus, fund and implement a series of proposals for wildlife corridor protection in the study area.

### **III. Discussion of Group Goals and Objectives**

Ron proposed the working group goal and defined each part of it. He wanted to make sure everyone was comfortable with the goal and asked if anyone had any questions or comments regarding the goal.

**“The Timely delivery of safe transportation improvements while preserving and enhancing wildlife corridor integrity.”** This is the Wildlife Corridor Working Group Goal.

‘Safety’ was defined as relating to both the traveling public and animals; ‘preserving’ to maintain existing conditions, and ‘enhancing’ to bring back wildlife’s ability to traverse the area.

One objective of the group will be to create an action and implementation plan for enhancement proposals within six months. Another objective was to explore all potential funding sources.

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#### **IV. Study Results and Enhancement Proposal Discussion**

Amy summarized the April 2004 consultant study (The Wildlife Corridor Assessment Report).

- The study encompassed the VEN 118 Corridor between the State Route 23 and State Route 27.
- The study included nine linkage locations with camera set ups and thirty scent station locations.
- There were four quarterly surveys completed.
- The final report included an evaluation of the survey data collected as well as information on other past studies, along with land use information.
- Enhancement proposals were suggested and ranked by biological importance. This ranking system took into consideration future land use.

#### **V. Funding**

The working group discussed very potential federal, state, and local funding sources.

- Funding may be available from required mitigation from proposed projects, including \$200,000 identified in the approved Rocky Peak Interchange project.
- We will have \$450,000 for wildlife improvements from a TEA grant that will be funded in May.
- There is the possibility that a multi-partner group such as this will be eligible for some federal funding if we set priorities and show what exactly it is the working group supports.
- There were other ideas about funding which included looking into opportunities with the Coastal Conservancy, LA River Project, Inter-Regional Water Management, Article 3 Funds for bicycle and pedestrian areas, State water grants, FHWA, National Transportation Research Boards and EEM grants. The group was asked to think about other potential sources of funding for next meeting.

#### **VI. Comments, Questions and Answers**

- It was asked what the word “safe” in the proposed goal meant. It was explained that it represents safety for the motoring public, safe animal interaction with public/recreation. It also helps when trying to secure funding if safety is being promoted.
- There was clarification on what limiting human usage meant. Limiting human usage means to limit access or limit the hours of access to a particular trail or area.
- How will this group tie to other projects along the VEN 118? The purpose of this group is not to revisit projects already approved, but focus on future projects that require NEPA and/or CEQA documents. This group will track with other projects in the area, aligning multiple time frames while coordinating with other agencies and groups to result in the best outcome for the study area. An action plan should be available within six months. At that point in time we can see where projects and their schedules are.
- Two public attendees spoke in favor of closing Rocky Peak Rd.
- A public attendee and agency representative spoke in favor of constructing Rocky Peak Rd.

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- Waste Management Industries bought the Unocal land on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Caltrans' obligation to build the Alamos Canyon Interchange remains binding, however. It was stated that the cloverleaf design interchange would still be needed for development to the south at Alamos Canyon.
- There was a discussion of the problem with homeless at some wildlife crossing locations. The suggested solutions included police sweeps.
- Coyotes were noted crossing at Kuehner.
- It was suggested that the Flood Control District should be included in the next group meeting.
- Deer have been seen at Hummingbird Creek and Rocky Peak Rd.
- If a transportation project that is funded is abandoned, does that save the state that money? Not really, the funds just get shifted to another highway improvement project.
- From a biological standpoint, human use and wildlife uses are consistent with one another as long as objectives are set in accordance with one another. You can enhance trail use for humans and wildlife at the same time.

**VII. Action Items**

- The Ventura 118 Wildlife Corridor Proposed Enhancements Overview Chart that was handed out was the focus of various comments:
  - 1) We need to further indicate the difference between "High" costs, adding an additional category that would identify how many millions we are talking about ("Very High").
  - 2) Anyone with other suggestions on this Overview Chart should send their comments in to Caltrans before the next meeting. These comments would be on the Enhancement Overview list, Biological Importance list, and/or the Ranked Cost.
- Members or individuals that request copies of the study on CD will be supplied to them. Please contact Amy.
- Fill out comment cards with enhancement ideas and funding ideas. While attendees received a hard copy of the cards for their use, Amy will provide this form in an electronic format if needed.
- We need a complete list of funding opportunities and when their application cycles occur. Amy will prepare a list for the next meeting.
- Contact Flood Control District to become an active member of group. Amy will contact.
- **The next meeting is scheduled for January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at City Hall in Simi Valley.**